

Star Carr in the New Millennium

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Star Carr is a site that is known worldwide and yet in many ways remains enigmatic. Much of the recent literature has been concerned with the deposition of artefacts and fauna into the lake edge and what this means in terms of the social and symbolic understanding of animals and their relationships with the people living there. One of the most important outcomes from recent fieldwork is that the occupation area is much larger than previously imagined. This paper reviews some of the recent interpretations and presents some of the preliminary findings from recent research, demonstrating that there is still much to be learnt from the study of Star Carr.

Introduction

It has been suggested in recent years that Mesolithic archaeology has suffered from ‘Star Carr syndrome’ because the site gets mentioned in the literature far too frequently. In fact, Peter Woodman has proposed that we would know far more about the Mesolithic period if Star Carr had never been found and excavated! This is partly because it is frequently discussed as if it were a ‘type site’, but we intend to argue in this paper that Star Carr is far from typical.

Star Carr has maintained its worldwide significance since its discovery 60 years ago by John Moore, and excavation by Grahame Clark (1954), and has been repeatedly re-interpreted (Lane & Schadla-Hall 2004). Clark’s excavations yielded a remarkably

well-preserved array of artefacts and environmental evidence from the Early Mesolithic, and also provided much of the foundation for Clark’s economic and environmental approach to archaeology (eg, Clark 1952). This approach, though superseded in other periods, still retains a strong interpretive hold within Mesolithic studies and has continued to exert influence on reinterpretations of Star Carr until recently.

However, in the new millennium, perceptions of the site have begun to change and recent interpretations have focused on the unusual depositional practices represented at the site and the social and symbolic understanding of animals that these practices entailed (Conneller 2000, 2003, 2004; Pollard 2000; Bevan 2003; Chatterton 2003). This

flurry of recent articles indicates that 60 years on Star Carr is as important and relevant as ever and still retains a considerable hold over the archaeological imagination.

However, Star Carr remains enigmatic; many of the original questions, such as site function and seasonality have not been satisfactorily answered (Milner 2006), and recent interpretations have thrown up a range of new questions that remain. One of the fundamental reasons for this is the lack of understanding as to what Star Carr actually represents. Clark used the distribution of flint (36 pieces of flint per square yard) to define the limits of the occupied area, a decision that has had far reaching consequences for the interpretation of the site. Recent work has demonstrated that the original excavations may represent only a very small fraction of the ‘site’ (Milner 2007; Taylor 2007). Similarly, Clark believed that his site was on dry land and reed swamp, stabilised by a brushwood platform; again recent work suggests that parts of what we know of as Star Carr were actually underwater.

Ongoing fieldwork on Star Carr, undertaken by the authors, aims to address these issues. The first part of this paper will give a brief overview of Clark’s work at Star Carr and summarise the more dominant re-interpretations. The second part takes up the challenges offered by the new interpretations of the site and explores the questions we should be asking of the site in the new millennium. Finally the results of preliminary excavations at Star Carr, undertaken by the authors in 2004 and 2005, which have attempted to address some of these new issues, are discussed.

Star Carr

Star Carr, located in the Vale of Pickering, North Yorkshire was excavated by J.G.D. Clark over three seasons between 1949 and 1951 (Clark 1954). The excavation yielded an extremely broad range of archaeological material, and the waterlogged deposits, as Clark had hoped, produced numerous organic artefacts. The range and quantity of material recovered was remarkable in comparison with what was previously known from the British Isles, particularly the 191 barbed points (Table 9.1). The accumulation of brushwood uncovered, was interpreted as an ‘occupation platform’ and faunal remains revealed that a wide variety of animals had been exploited (Frazer & King 1954). Clark interpreted Star Carr as a residential base camp based on the broad range of lithic and other tool types present, and placed considerable emphasis on seasonality, that Frazer & King (1954) inferred from the antlers of red and roe deer and elk as indicating occupation in midwinter and spring.

Two decades later, Clark returned to the Star Carr data in order to expand his interpretation of the site (Clark 1972). He attempted to reconstruct the entire settlement system of Star Carr’s inhabitants by suggesting, on the basis of inferred migration patterns of red deer, that human groups had a similar upland/summer, lowland/winter pattern as their prey and that the people who wintered at Star Carr spent their summers hunting deer on the North York Moors. There have since been many conflicting views of site seasonality from winter occupation (Frazer & King 1954; Mellars 1976; Noe-Nygaard 1975; Carter 1997;

<i>Categories of artefact</i>	<i>Star Carr</i>	<i>Other sites</i>
Flint assemblages with microliths, burins, endscrapers and core axes/adzes with tranchet edge	numerous	numerous
Stone maceheads with hourglass perforation	-	present
Barbed points: antler/bone	191	6
Antler mattock-heads (elk)	6	-
Bodkins (elk metapodial)	4	-
Skin-working(?) tools (aurochs bone)	11	-
Stag frontlet masks (red deer)	21	-
Wooden paddle	1	-
Wooden mattock handle	1	-
Birch bark rolls	present	-
Birch pine resin mounting	1	-
Beads: amber	3	-
perforated shale	present	-
tubular bone	1	-

Table 9.1: Artefact categories recovered from Star Carr in comparison with previously excavated Mesolithic sites (after Clark 1974)

1998) to spring and/or summer occupation (eg, Jacobi 1978; Legge & Rowley-Conwy 1988), to various seasons (Pitts 1979; Andresen *et al.* 1981). However, seasonality studies have their limitations; one of the reasons for so many conflicting interpretations results from the fact that Star Carr itself is a part of a palimpsest that in turn should be fitted into the wider landscape, and should not be reduced to a single component of an idealised yearly round (Conneller 2001; Milner 2003; 2005).

Similarly, interpretations of site function have changed over the years from Star Carr being a residential base camp (Clark 1954; Pitts 1979; Price 1982) to a butchery camp (Caulfield 1978) and a kill site (see Andresen *et al.* 1981) or a hunting camp (Legge & Rowley-Conwy 1988). The problems associated with the characterisation of site types and the use of ethnographic analogies have been rehearsed elsewhere (see eg, Conneller 2001; Lane & Schadla-Hall 2004) but despite these

problems and recent interpretations that better incorporate the artefactual evidence (eg, Pollard 2000; Chatterton 2003; Conneller 2004), the hunting camp hypothesis still appears dominant.

Further fieldwork in the Vale of Pickering

Over the last 30 years, survey and excavations have resumed in the landscape around the site of Star Carr. These started in 1976 at Seamer Carr where excavations were carried out in advance of the building of a waste disposal site. Two large sites (composed of the debris of repeated reoccupations), Seamer C and Seamer K, were found as well as a number of smaller activity areas. These excavations revealed the potential of the area for yielding further sites, as well as placing Star Carr in a wider context. They also highlighted the fact that the Mesolithic horizons were increasingly threatened by drainage, peat shrinkage and deep ploughing, and led to the formation of the Vale of Pickering Research Trust (VPRT) in 1985. Since this time, the VPRT has undertaken further fieldwork in this landscape, reconstructing the topography of the Mesolithic landscape and the margins and islands of Lake Flixtion through a programme of augering, and test-pitting to find new Mesolithic sites (Figs 9.1, 9.2 & 9.3) (Conneller & Schadla-Hall 2003; Lane & Schadla-Hall in press).

It is very important to note that, despite initial expectations to the contrary, no more Star Carrs have been discovered. Despite good organic preservation, various classes of artefacts are almost entirely restricted to Star Carr. For instance, a total of 193 barbed points (Fig. 9.4) have been recovered from Star Carr: 191 from the original excavations (Clark 1954); one from Tot Lord's collection in the 1950s (Dark *et al.* 2006); and one from the excavations in the 1980s (Mellars & Dark 1998). Only two further barbed points have been found: a fragment of one on Flixtion island by John Moore (Clark 1954) and one on No Name Hill (Lane & Schadla-Hall in press). In addition, no more antler frontlets, antler mattocks or beads have been discovered elsewhere in the Vale.

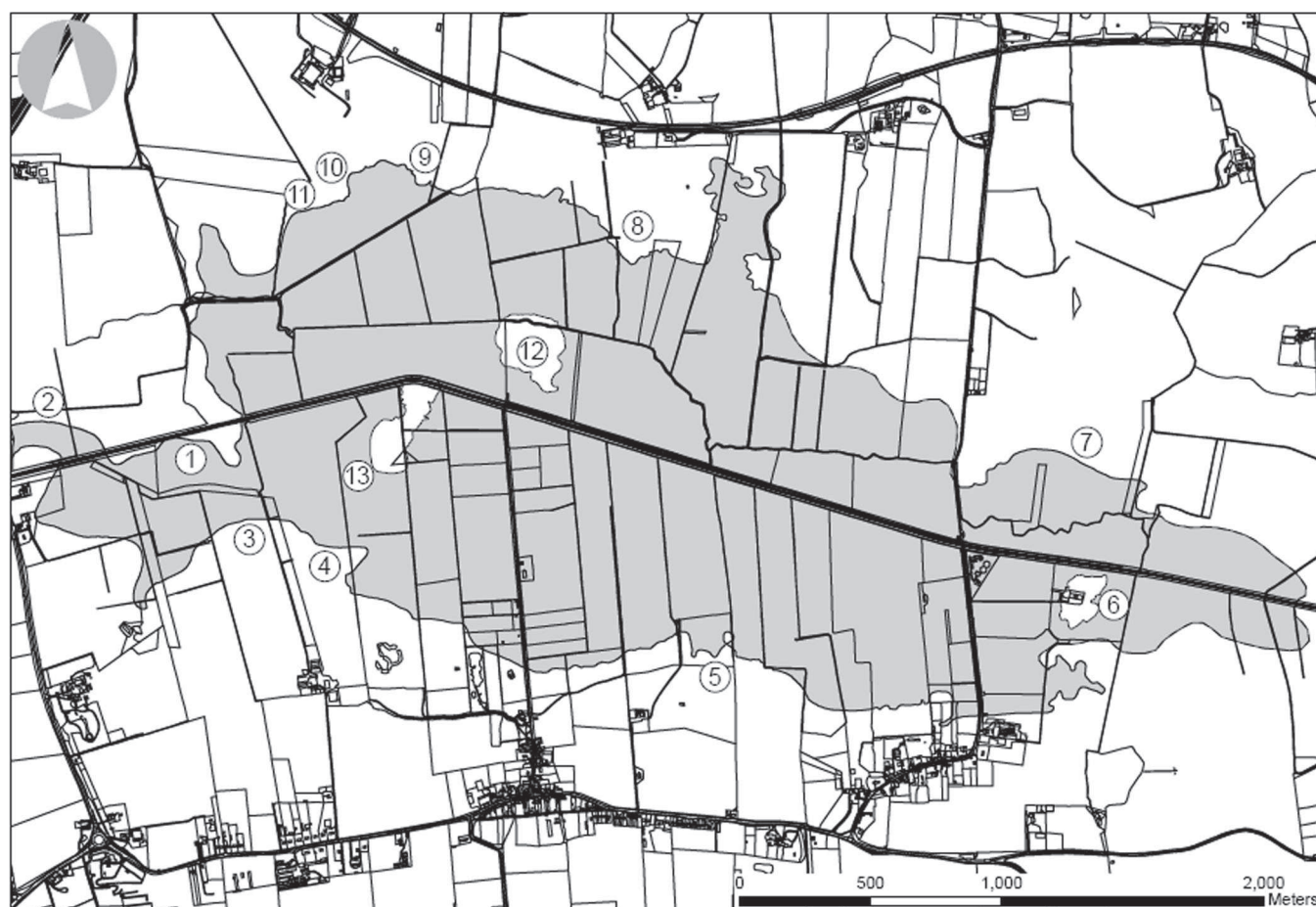
Further work was conducted at Star Carr in 1985 when a trench was opened to the east of Clark's excavations for the purpose of taking an environmental sample. A dense spread of lithic and faunal material associated with a

Figure 9.1: (right)
A team augering and measuring to the base of the peat in order to recreate the Mesolithic landscape



Figure 9.2: (below)
excavating 2 × 2 m test-pits around the lake margins





Early Mesolithic sites around Lake Flixton. 1. Star Carr, 2. Flixton 9, 3. VP-D, 4. VP-E, 5. Flixton School, 6. Barry's Island, 7. Lingholme Farm, 8. Cayton Carr, 9. Seamer Carr C, 10. Seamer Carr K, 11. Seamer Carr D, 12. No Name Hill, 13. Flixton Island

timber platform was encountered, suggesting that the Star Carr site extended considerably beyond Clark's original delimitation of its boundaries (Mellars & Dark 1998). In 1989 further excavations were carried out in the area with the aim of investigating the total spatial extent of the site, the chronology and season of occupation and the nature of Clark's brushwood 'occupation platform' (Mellars & Dark *ibid.*).

The excavations demonstrated that lithic material continued to the north and east on the dry land areas, representing portions of activity areas at a variety of different densities. Dark's palaeoenvironmental work included an analysis of macroscopic charcoal in a precisely dated stratigraphic sequence and more recent work by Dark *et al.* (2006) has further refined our understanding of the chronology of occupation, suggesting several phases of burning, although directly dated bone and antler artefacts from both excavations appear

to relate to the occupation represented by the first phase of burning.

Thus further fieldwork in the Vale over the last 30+ years has highlighted two key issues: first is that Star Carr appears to be a unique type of site within the landscape, and second that Star Carr is both far larger than originally thought and was repeatedly revisited. This latter observation is particularly important because it obviously renders accounts that treat the lithics or faunal remains as a single assemblage problematic.

Star Carr as a significant place in the landscape

The growing recognition that Star Carr represents something unusual, as well as the

Figure 9.3: A map of Lake Flixton, as defined through augering (not fully completed) and the Early Mesolithic sites found along its shore and on its islands

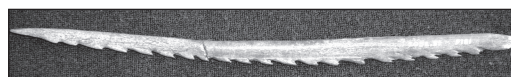


Figure 9.4: A barbed point from Clark's excavations (courtesy of the Yorkshire Museum)

growing interest in interpretative approaches to the Mesolithic, has led to a new series of engagements with the site in the new millennium (Pollard 2000; Bevan 2003; Chatterton 2003; Conneller 2003; Conneller & Schadla-Hall 2003; Conneller 2004). These have focused on such issues as landscape, memory, technology and more particularly on acts of deposition and their relationship to the social significance of animals.

Pollard (2000) examined the complex way the site was generated, as part of prolonged depositional activity. Some of this he suggests was primary, other episodes secondary, as refuse was brought and dumped onto the timber platform. Elements of this he suggests, such as the two clusters of beads, may have been more formal in nature. Other acts of deposition may have been structured through culturally specific ways of acting, such as attitudes of respect for animals necessitating the careful deposition of animal remains.

Pollard's arguments were extended by Chatterton (2003), in what is the most thorough argument for the reinterpretation of Star Carr as a ritual site. Chatterton follows Price (1982) and draws upon new palaeoenvironmental evidence (Mellars & Dark 1998) in suggesting that the majority of the area excavated by Clark was under water during the Early Mesolithic. He also points out the unusual range and quantity of material culture recovered from the site and suggested that these objects were the focus of ritual deposition into the open water of the lake. The association of barbed points, antler frontlets and beads with water-logged deposits is reiterated at the German sites of Hohen Viecheln and Bedburg-Königshoven (Schuldt 1961; Street 1991), while deposits of significant numbers of barbed points in watery contexts are also known from the Europoort, Rotterdam (Verhart 1995) and Friesack, Germany (Gramsch & Kloss 1989): so Star Carr seems part of a broader western European Early Mesolithic tradition focused on the patterned deposition of certain important objects. Chatterton suggests these practices can be seen as a reflection of attitudes of respect towards animals known amongst recent hunter-gatherer groups, which necessitated the ritual deposition of animal bones and artefacts made from their body parts.

Star Carr received similar treatment in two other articles published in the same year.

Conneller (2003) and Conneller & Schadla-Hall (2003) independently put forward similar interpretations to Chatterton. Both these works proceeded from analysis of material recovered from the remainder of the Vale of Pickering and the recognition that Star Carr was unique in this context. These articles also identify the social significance Mesolithic people attributed to animals, particularly in this context red deer, as the motivation behind the unusual depositional practices at the site. Conneller & Schadla-Hall (2003) highlight the focus on the manufacture of objects made from animal remains at Star Carr and technological connections between barbed points and the antler frontlets. They point out the lengthy time periods over which these practices of manufacture and deposition occurred at the site and that this itself is unusual in the context of the remainder of the Vale of Pickering where there is little evidence for functional stability in landscape use. However they also urged against attributing a single function, such as 'ritual site' to Star Carr, since technological analysis highlights the range of activities at the site and the network of connections between Star Carr and other sites in the vicinity.

A final focus of these new approaches has been the antler frontlets themselves (Bevan 2003; Conneller 2004). Bevan examines ethnographic accounts of the use of animal masks and attitudes to deer and antler, and suggests that it is more likely that the frontlets were used in ritual activity than representing hunting aids. She tentatively suggests use by young male initiates, producing analogies between the male life-cycles and those of the stag. Conneller in her account (2004) does not address the function of the frontlets, but suggests that rather than being perceived as masks, hiding the human body, they functioned to transform it. She argues that though many of the objects made from animal remains at the site can be argued to have extended the human body, patterns of deposition suggest that the frontlets had more formal significance to the people who visited Star Carr.

New investigations at Star Carr

The new interpretations of the site have raised a number of new research questions, primarily related to the context, nature and extent of deposition at the site. To address these, a new

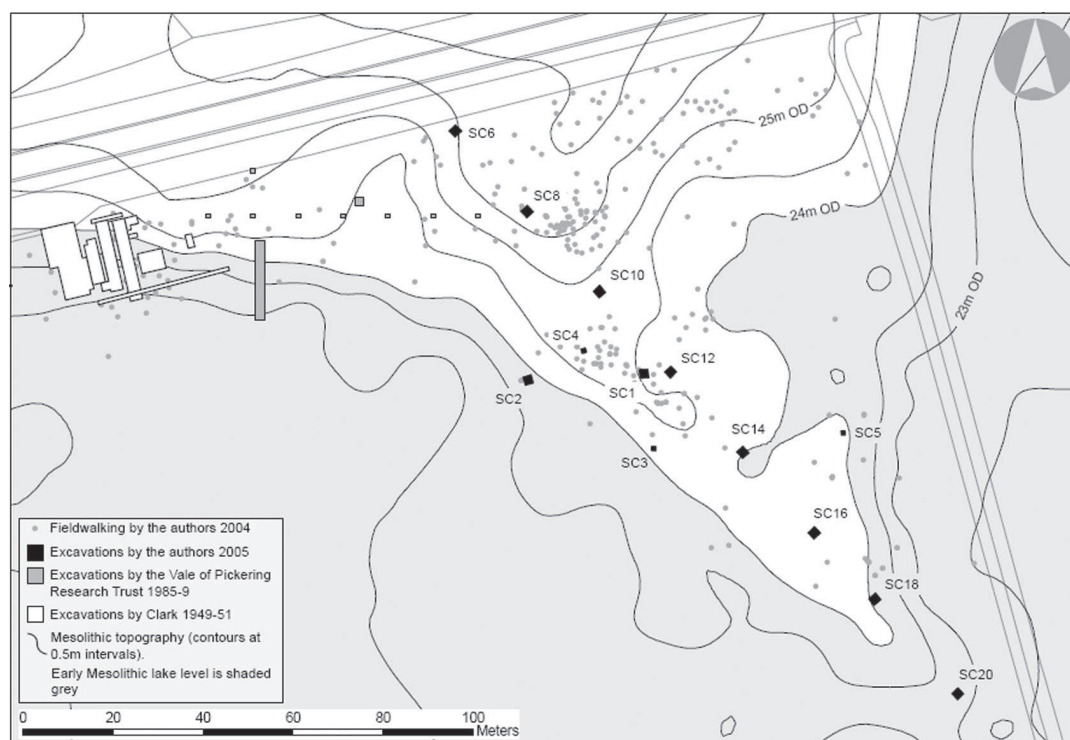


Figure 9.5: The locations of the trenches from the 3 phases of excavation at Star Carr and contour lines from augering in 2004–5

Figure 9.6: Southwards view of test-pits excavated down the peninsula, with the Yorkshire Wolds in the distance

programme of survey and exploratory excavation was established at Star Carr (Fig. 9.5). This began in 2004 when the Star Carr field was intensively fieldwalked, revealing a 100m wide scatter of Early Mesolithic material extending across a ridge of high ground to the east of Clark's original excavations. The ridge appears on Cloutman's survey of the area and would have formed a narrow peninsula extending southwards into the lake (Cloutman 1988, fig. 4). Several small test pits, which were excavated across this area, recorded *in situ* Early Mesolithic material at relatively shallow depths beneath the plough soil.

The following year a more detailed survey of this area was carried out. The sub-surface topography was mapped by a close interval (10 m) auger survey and for the first time it was possible to demonstrate a highly variable sub-surface microtopography. A series of 2 × 2 m test pits were excavated at regular intervals along the line of the ridge (Fig. 9.6). The results showed that the land rose to the east of Star Carr, forming a small hillock of glacially derived sand and gravel. From this a narrow peninsula or spit extended southwards, roughly 100m into the lake. In places the Early Mesolithic horizon lay above a thick deposit of fine aeolian sands of Younger Dryas age sealing a Late Glacial Interstadial soil horizon.



This parallels the late glacial sequence recorded at Seamer K (Lane & Schadla-Hall in press).

The spread of Early Mesolithic artefacts was far more extensive than the 2004 fieldwalking had suggested, as natural undulations in the post glacial topography and an increasing depth of peat towards the south has protected archaeological deposits from plough disturbance. Plough damage was, however, recorded in the test pits further to the north

and, whilst the amount of flint within the ploughsoil was relatively small this can only increase with time.

Though the sample areas were too small to identify distinct scatters, the lithic distribution as a whole extended across the higher ground in the north and along almost the entire length of the peninsula – a spread of at least 145 m. The density of lithics showed some variation with substantial concentrations on both the north (trench 8: 77.25 flints per metre) and south (trench 16: 139 flints per metre) ends of the peninsula but significantly less in the middle (trench 12: 34 flints per metre).

Apart from a very small number of lithics in trenches 2, 16 and 20 the main concentrations of artefacts lay above 24m OD. This may imply that this was the approximate location of the lake margin, though this assumes that activity was limited to the dryland areas and that lithics were not being either processed or discarded into shallow water around the edge of the peninsula.

Water and wood

No evidence for the timber platform was encountered in the two trenches excavated in the deep water areas (trenches 2 and 20) and, though this is only a small sample of the waterlogged deposits, it indicates a restricted (or at least discontinuous) distribution of the platform. However further work is certainly needed to refine understanding of the extent and nature of the platform. Whilst a timber platform was undoubtedly encountered in the 1985 excavations, made from worked aspen (*Populus sp.*) or willow (*Salix sp.*), Clark's brushwood 'platform' apparently consisted of unworked birch. Furthermore in Clark's section the artefacts 'float' above the timber platform, suggesting it may represent simply one of the ubiquitous accumulations of unworked driftwood found round the margins of Lake Flixton. Accounts of those excavating with Clark indicate that 'other timber platforms' were encountered and that the wood that was recorded was done so at a fairly arbitrary level (Schadla-Hall pers. comm). This raises the possibility that either the 'real' timber platform of worked wood was destroyed in the higher levels of Clark's excavations, or that the platform may be much smaller in extent than originally envisaged and further excavation work is clearly required to

establish the extent and nature of the deposits of worked wood.

Artefacts and deposition

No organic artefacts, such as barbed points and antler frontlets, were encountered, nor were any antlers. This could suggest that the deposition of unusual objects was spatially restricted. However, since only two wetland test-pits were excavated, the sample is too small to make a definite statement and further excavation is needed to address this issue. Small quantities of bone were recovered from test-pit 20. These mainly consist of highly fragmented pieces of large mammal long bone. This relatively sparse distribution and high levels of fragmentation appears to have more in common with the faunal assemblages elsewhere in the Vale (Uchiyama *et al.* in press) than the more complete material at Star Carr, though again further excavations will elucidate this.

Table 9.2 compares the lithic debitage found during the three excavations. This is obviously a fairly crude measure of difference, combining a number of diachronic activity episodes. However, it does give a broad impression of the activities occurring along a stretch of land from east (2004–5 excavations) and central (1985/1989) to west (1949–51). Many of the frequencies are remarkably similar, however the higher quantities of burins recovered from Clark's excavations should be noted. This is likely to relate to the concentration of antler working in this area (Dumont 1988, 1989). Conneller (2004) argues that antlers were extremely significant to the people who visited Star Carr and that antler technologies were caught up in the unusual depositional practices undertaken at the site. Lower quantities of burins in the 2004–5 excavations might be taken as further support that these practices did not extend to the peninsula to the east.

However axes, which are primarily restricted to Star Carr in relation to other sites in the Vale of Pickering, are also found on the peninsula. Ten examples were found in past fieldwork (Clark 1954; Mellars & Dark 1998) and two new examples have been recovered on the peninsula, one through excavation, the other during fieldwalking. As outlined above, only two other examples are known from elsewhere in the Vale: one from No Name Hill and the other from Flixton School Field (see also Table 9.3). A functional argument could be made that the

large numbers of axes recovered at Star Carr are related to the cutting and shaping of wood for the timber structure uncovered by the 1985 excavation. However axe sharpening flakes are recovered at a number of sites in the Vale, so it seems that axes were being manufactured and used at these sites, but rarely deposited. Perhaps, as has been argued for antler working, wood-working technologies and more formal depositional practices were inextricably intertwined. The construction of the timber platform was a unique, large-scale, communal activity that may have involved people from a number of different groups. People may have come from distances to help in this undertaking. It may be no coincidence that axes are more likely to be made from Wolds flint than other tools and debris recovered from sites in the Vale and these may have been brought by people coming from the south.

Conclusions

Since its discovery over 60 years ago, Star Carr has remained firmly fixed in the minds of archaeologists. Its name remains synonymous with the Early Mesolithic and the interpretations that have been based upon it reflect the changing nature of archaeological thought, from economic to interpretative approaches. And yet we still know relatively little about the site, both in terms of the physical remains (eg, its extent and distribution of artefacts) and the forms of past activities that have shaped and defined it. Paradoxically other sites, both in the immediate area and elsewhere in the country have been far more extensively excavated and greater use has been made of modern scientific techniques than were available at the time of Clark's excavations. What the fairly limited fieldwork carried out on Star Carr over the past two decades has demonstrated is the wealth of information still to be recovered from the site whilst at the same time clearly illustrating our lack of any real understanding of the site, its context and the larger landscape within which it was used.

But rather than concentrate upon the obvious limitations in our knowledge, it may be more productive to highlight some objectives for future work on the site based on the main points highlighted by this paper. Undoubtedly the central aim of any future work must be to determine the depositional context of the

<i>Category</i>	<i>Star Carr 2005-6</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Star Carr Mellars</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Star Carr Clark</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Tools:</i>						
Awl	2	0.1	0	0	114	0.67
Axe	1	0.05	0	0	7	0.04
Backed blade	0	0	0	0	0	0
Burin	14	0.7	8	1.59	336	1.98
Denticulate	1	0.05	0	0	0	0
Hammerstone	1	0.05	0	0	0	0
Microlith	30	1.5	7	1.39	248	1.46
Notch	0	0	0	0	0	0
Saw	0	0	0	0	5	0.03
Scraper	32	1.6	10	1.99	326	1.92
Scraper/burin	1	0.05	0	0	9	0.05
Strike-a-light	1	0.05	1	0.2	3	0.02
Tang	0	0	0	0	2	0.01
Truncation	10	0.5	0	0	48	0.28
Retouched/used	87	4.34	26	5.17	1,276	7.53
<i>Tool spalls:</i>						
Axe flake	7	0.35	0	0	26	0.15
Burin spall	11	0.55	7	1.39	0	0
Microburin	3	0.15	4	0.8	27	0.16
Micro-intermediate	1	0.05	1	0.2		
Scraper spall	2	0.1	2	0.4	0	0
<i>Core preparation:</i>					712	4.2
Core tablet	34	1.7	6	1.19	na ¹	na ¹
Crested blade	23	1.15	7	1.39	na ¹	na ¹
Plunging	7	0.35	0	0	na ¹	na ¹
Step removal	4	0.2	0	0	na ¹	na ¹
<i>Debitage:</i>						
Blade	241	12.03	97	19.28		
Flake	424	21.17	123	24.45	13,474 ²	79.55 ²
Fragment	893	44.58	158	31.41		
Chip	124	6.19	37	7.36	na ³	na ³
Core	26	1.3	6	1.19	287	1.69
Nodule	0	0	1	0.2	0	0
Shatter fragment	23	1.15	2	0.4	37	0.22
Total	2,003		503		16,937	

material recovered by Clark and to investigate its full extent. It is less than clear to what extent the area that was investigated by Clark was underwater during the Early Mesolithic and how it may have changed seasonally. It is therefore necessary to resolve this issue with further palaeoenvironmental and geoarchaeological work along with more detailed studies of

Table 9.2. Comparison of the Star Carr assemblages. ¹These combined as 'core preparation'. ²These combined in Clark's totals. ³Pieces smaller than Clark's thumbnail were discarded

Table 9.3. Comparison of Star Carr assemblages with others in the Vale.

¹These sites have an Upper Palaeolithic component

Category	Star Carr 2004-5	Star Carr Mellars	Star Carr Clark	No Name Hill	VPD	VPE	Seamer C ¹	Seamer K ¹	Seamer D
Tools:									
Awl	0.1	0	0.67	0.17	0.1	0	0.03	0.07	0
Axe	0.05	0	0.04	0.09	0	0	0	0	0
Backed blade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.08	0.23	
Burin	0.7	1.59	1.98	0.09	0.5	1.6	0.24	0.64	0.5
Denticulate	0.05	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.56	0
Hammerstone	0.05	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.01	0
Microlith	1.5	1.39	1.46	1.48	1.2	1.6	0.35	0.56	0
Notch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.01	
Saw	0	0	0.03	0	0	0	0	0.01	0
Scraper	1.6	1.99	1.92	1.83	0.6	1.6	1.4	1.13	1.9
Scraper/burin	0.05	0	0.05	0.17	0	0	0	0.03	0
Strike-a-light	0.05	0.2	0.02	0	0	0	0.01	0.01	0.5
Tang	0	0	0.01	0	0	0	0.01	0	0
Truncation	0.5	0	0.28	0.09	0.2	0	0.08	0.14	0.5
Retouched/used	4.34	5.17	7.53	6.64	3.7	3.2	1.58	1.61	2.3
Tool spalls:									
Axe flake	0.35	0	0.15	0.17	0	0.4	0.01	0.02	0
Burin spall	0.55	1.39	0	0.26	1	0	0.37	1.66	0
Microburin	0.15	0.8	0.16	0.35	1.3	0	0.11	0.54	1.4
Micro-intermediate	0.05	0.2	0	0.17	0	0	0.04	0.03	0
Scraper spall	0.1	0.4	4.2	0	0	0	0.04	0.02	0
Core preparation:									
Core tablet	1.7	1.19	na	0.35	0.7	0.4	0.28	0.07	0.5
Crested blade	1.15	1.39	na	1.14	0.6	1.2	0.72	0.57	0.5
Plunging	0.35	0	na	0.52	0.04	0.4	0.08	0.14	0
Step removal	0.2	0	na	0.09	0.2	0	0.22	0.02	0
Debitage:									
Blade	12.03	19.28		11.35	9.8	7.5	6.85	5.01	9.8
Flake	21.17	24.45	79.55	25.76	25.3	23.4	17	32.72	24.8
Fragment	44.58	31.41		40.35	25.7	32.9	28.1	14.29	45.3
Chip	6.19	7.36	na	7.16	27.5	26.2	41.3	39.48	7
Core	1.3	1.19	1.69	1.22	0.8	0	0.7	0.78	1.9
Nodule	0	0.2	0	0.09	0.1	0	0.05	0.16	2.8
Shatter fragment	1.15	0.4	0.22	0.44	0.8	0.4	0.48	0	0.5

the material culture assemblages themselves. Similarly, more extensive excavations are required to determine the extent of the more unusual artefacts present in the material assemblages. The timber platform is unlikely to exist in isolation and probably formed part of a larger structure (or structures); are similar assemblages to those discovered by Clark to

be found elsewhere on the nearby peninsula, or do his results represent the only finds of their type on the lake margins?

We should also beware of concentrating too much on the site of Clark's excavations. The more recent fieldwork has shown that, in terms of the distributions of the lithic assemblages, activity at Star Carr is far more extensive than has

hitherto been assumed. The recent discovery of Early Mesolithic material along the length of the peninsula demonstrates that the full extent of activity still remains to be investigated. This is particularly so given the excavation of dense lithic concentrations in areas that appeared largely sterile during the field walking survey. More extensive fieldwalking and sampling is required to fully define the extents of activity in the immediate area of Clark's trenches, and we need to elucidate the relationships between the activity that this material represents and that represented by Clark's discoveries. Recent work by Dark *et al.* (2006) has begun to analyse the complex temporalities of occupation in the different areas of Star Carr; activities on the peninsula need to be tied into this picture. Comparison of the lithic assemblages recovered by the authors with the results of previous fieldwork has begun to show potential relationships between the various areas of the site.

Interpretation, in contrast to excavation, has certainly not been lacking from Star Carr. As this paper and several others have shown (eg, Mellars & Dark 1998; Conneller 2003; Lane & Schadla-Hall 2004), the site has been interpreted and reinterpreted in a number of ways since it was first discovered. We are now far more aware of the place of the site within its wider setting, both physically and culturally and this understanding can only increase through the ongoing work of the Vale of Pickering Research Trust. The range of possible activities that took place at Star Carr, the social significance of the site and its place in Early Mesolithic cosmologies have also developed as new theoretical approaches have worked through existing material. A continuing programme of fieldwork on the area will mean that a future generation of archaeologists will be able to build on this work and will ensure that Star Carr remains a key site for archaeologists and archaeology for years to come.

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